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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

SPOT COMMENTARY

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Opposition Protest Campaign Gets Started

The Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) this afternoon kicked off its rally in the center of Belgrade to announce its strategy to wrest control of the FRY Presidency from Milosevic in coming days. The rally began late and the crowds numbered only around 20,000. DOS senior official Djindjic announced that a second rally would be held in the center of Belgrade tonight at 1800 local time and subsequent rallies are expected in Serbia this weekend. Djindjic said that a general strike throughout Serbia is slated to begin on Monday.

- In many cities and towns, students and teachers are boycotting classes until Kostunica becomes president, while doctors, nurses, and shopkeepers plan to do the same, according to press reports. Crowds numbering in the low thousands turned out in Nis, Cacak, Kraljevo, Kragujevac, and Sremski Mitrovica to engage in acts of civil disobedience, including blocking roads and closing cimenas and theaters, as well as holding strikes affecting medical centers, transportation, media, and other public services.
- DOS presidential candidate Kostunica told EU Heads of Mission yesterday that he favors a strategy that combines nightly demonstrations to press Milosevic internally and international diplomatic pressure against the regime. However, he remains wary of holding a general nationwide strike because he considers it is too provocative, *suggesting some differences of opinion with Djindjic regarding opposition strategy*. Kostunica said he also plans a deliberate, procedural challenge to force Milosevic accept an election defeat.

Press reports indicate that Moscow and Athens are "exploring options" to convince Kostunica to compete in a second round runoff

Kostunica today publicly called on the international community, specifically Greece and Russia, to recount the ballots to prove that the DOS presidential candidate won in the first round.

- Athens quickly agreed to send monitors to verify the ballot count, according to press reporting. Meanwhile, Russia's Balkan envoy Chizhov plans to travel to Belgrade on Monday to try to break the impasse between the opposition and the regime.

Meanwhile, Milosevic appears to be reinvigorating the repressive policies pursued by the regime during the run-up to elections in preparation for the next round.

Prepared by: DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force. Comments and Questions can be addressed to

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- Press reports indicate that Serbian police are again detaining Otpor activists or summoning them for questioning—a practice that had ceased in the immediate aftermath of the elections.
- Yugoslav authorities today ordered the BBC correspondent in Belgrade to leave within 48 hours, according to press reports.

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